ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2015

TRANSFORMING ANGUS: AGILE WORKING AND ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

REPORT BY THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR – RESOURCES

ABSTRACT

This report asks the committee to approve the strategy to progress agile working and the associated accommodation review.

1.   **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:

(i)   Consider the terms of this report and approve the 'Agile Working and Accommodation Strategy' specified in the Appendix.

(ii)   Instruct officers to bring forward details of the implementation programme for agile working and the associated plans to secure a sustainable property estate.

2.   **ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/ SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/ COPORATE PLAN**

This report contributes to the following local outcome contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013 - 2016:

- Angus being a good place to live and work in and where our carbon footprint is reduced.

3.   **BACKGROUND**

Previous studies have highlighted an over provision and associated poor occupancy/ use of existing Council office space. Addressing this issue and moving towards a modern approach to 'the office' and associated working arrangements, has not been progressed as quickly as anticipated for a variety of reasons.

Angus Council's Plan 2014 – 2017 sets out an 'Agile working and estates review' as one of the four key work-streams of the Transforming Angus change programme.

In addition, the Council Plan identifies where organisational change is needed to improve performance, and includes specific priorities to:

- promote a more agile approach to how and where we work; and

- to review our property estate to ensure we gain maximum value from our buildings and reduce our costs.

A new strategy has therefore been developed to re-energise this work, and also set out the key objectives and design principles within which those objectives will be implemented.

Members should also note that more information on Agile working, including confidence in its effective implementation, is now available to support this progressive approach to achieve an efficient and effective use of resources.

4.	**CURRENT POSITION**

Members will be aware that it is currently common practice in council offices to provide a 1:1 desk to staff ratio in most office settings. This, coupled with no coherent requirement to adopt differing office practices, such as clear desk policy or records management, plus a fixed desk approach to the office space, has contributed to the current poor occupancy of many office areas.

There are now many organisations in the public and private sectors that are moving towards the implementation of a more agile approach to working practice (within appropriate policy guidelines), to support their workforce achieve a healthy work/ life balance, improve performance and make the most effective use of its property estate.

5.	**PROPOSALS**

The 'Agile Working and Estates Review Strategy', which forms the Appendix to this report, aims to create a sustainable property estate, improve service delivery and the Council's organisational effectiveness, through the successful adoption of agile working practices and workplace design, phased in to a programme of locations.

Governance arrangements have been implemented and include a Programme Board established to direct the project, along with the appointment of a Programme Lead officer whose post is being funded through the Transforming Angus change fund to deliver this initiative as part of the Transforming Angus change programme.

Officers have also engaged with hub (East Central Scotland) colleagues following a bid for hub enabling funding to support this initiative. While this funding has not yet been confirmed, initial discussions have identified a methodology to plan the alignment of emerging service needs against the Council's current property portfolio.

Members should note that staff engagement throughout the implementation of this strategy will be given paramount importance, including support from the Organisational Development team. Trade Union representation will also be invited to attend the Programme Board meetings.

As this is a major change project, and as the programme is progressed and further key milestone information becomes available, members will be updated with further specific reports at those times.

6.	**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

It should also be noted that there are significant revenue budget savings to be achieved through this initiative and both quantitative and qualitative benefits realised from the programme will be identified and included in future update reports.

The cost of the Programme Lead officer post to support this initiative is being funded from the Transforming Angus Change fund, which was agreed by the Transforming Angus Programme Board at its meeting on 22nd July 2014.

7.	**OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There is a risk associated with this programme that the Council fails to maximise the potential opportunities from this strategy and the benefits are not fully realised. This risk is therefore being actively managed by the Transforming Angus Programme Board.

8.	**EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken for this strategy paper and is attached as Appendix B.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

  A – Agile Working and Accommodation Strategy
  B – Equalities Impact Assessment